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Chair: Mr. Ružička ..... (Slovakia)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 151: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (*continued*) (A/69/633, A/69/805 and A/69/839/Add.12)

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Agenda item 161: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (A/69/586, A/69/586/Corr.1, A/69/586/Corr.2, A/69/732 and A/69/839/Add.1)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (A/69/606, A/69/731, A/69/731/Corr.1 and A/69/839/Add.8)

Agenda item 162: Financing of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (*continued*) (A/69/677, A/69/800 and A/69/839/Add.15)

Agenda item 166: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (*continued*) (A/69/673, A/69/808 and A/69/839/Add.6)

1. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 12 May 2015 from the Controller to the Chairs of the Fifth Committee and of the Advisory Committee (A/C.5/69/22) indicating that the proposal for additional funding in the amount of $9,959,400 million for 2014/15 for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (A/69/857 and A/69/857/Corr.1) had been withdrawn.

2. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 10 April to 30 June 2014 (A/69/633) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/805) for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), said that the Mission had been in operation since April 2014 with a complete uniformed personnel component. In May 2014 the Advisory Committee had approved a commitment authority of up to $59.5 million for the establishment of the Mission. An amount of $59.2 million had been spent, and was now requested for appropriation.

3. A budget of $843.6 million was proposed for 2015/16, an increase of 34.2 per cent over 2014/15, reflecting full deployment of uniformed personnel in accordance with Security Council resolution 2149 (2014), and a net increase of 166 civilian posts and positions. The Mission would restructure its civilian staff, with the reassignment or redeployment of 23 posts, expand ground operations and establish additional facilities, including communications and information technology infrastructure and medical support.

4. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/620), the note on financing arrangements for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/69/832) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/797) for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), she said that a request for additional funding of $38.6 million for 2014/15 had been presented in March 2015. The Advisory Committee had recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in that amount, in addition to the $1.4 million already appropriated for 2014/15. The Advisory Committee had also encouraged the Mission to accommodate any additional resources within the current appropriation and to minimize any budget impact. As a result of slowdowns in joint operations with the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), projections for 2014/15 had been reduced from $38.6 million to $27.6 million. Updated supplementary information would shortly be provided to the Fifth Committee.

5. The proposed budget of $1.37 billion for 2015/16 for MONUSCO represented a decrease of 2 per cent compared with 2014/15, primarily attributable to

delayed deployment of military personnel and lower costs in respect of contingent-owned equipment.

6. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/619) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/785) for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), she said that the proposed budget of $389.5 million represented a reduction of 22.1 per cent compared with 2014/15. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2180 (2014), military contingents were being reduced from 5,021 to 2,370; 268 posts and positions were being abolished, and 38 converted to national staff. Five liaison offices and the regional office at Jacmel would be closed, the civilian air fleet was being reconfigured, and the Santo Domingo Support Office was being closed.

7. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/667) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/820) for the United Nations Mission in Liberia, she noted that, as stated by the Chair, the anticipated request for additional funding for 2014/15 would now not be made, owing to significant changes in the Mission's operational environment. The proposed budget of $355.2 million represented a reduction of 16.9 per cent compared with 2014/15, attributable to reductions in military and civilian personnel, as well as in facilities and in ground and air transportation.

8. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/593) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/784) for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), she said that for 2015/16 the Mission would require $936 million, a 12.7 per cent increase over 2014/15, reflecting increases in military and police personnel and a net increase of 108 civilian posts and positions. Funds were also needed for the construction of camps for the new force laydown structure, air transportation services, and improvised explosive device training for military contingents.

9. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/586, A/69/586/Corr.1 and A/69/586/Corr.2) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/732) for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), she said that the proposed budget for 2015/16 was $52.3 million, a decrease of 18 per cent compared with 2014/15, attributable primarily to a proposed reduction in military personnel and the elimination of four international posts and positions and 21 national posts.

10. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/606) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/731 and A/69/731/Corr.1) for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), she said that the proposed budget, amounting to $517.5 million, represented an increase of 1.6 per cent over 2014/15, attributable primarily to the deployment of two military contingent battalions and increased costs for civilian personnel.

11. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/677) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/800) for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), she said that the proposed budget of $1.1 billion represented an increase of 1.1 per cent compared with 2014/15. Owing to the difficult circumstances facing the Mission, with the presence of over 100,000 displaced persons, the budget provided for deployment at the highest authorized strength for military observers, military contingents, United Nations police and formed police personnel throughout 2015/16.

12. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/673) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/808) for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), she said that the proposed budget for 2015/16 was $1.1 billion, a decrease of 1.6 per cent from 2014/15. Increased costs for military and police personnel were offset by a reduction of 9.5 per cent in operational costs, mainly due to lower air transportation costs, lower hiring costs, and the reduction in the fleet by two rotary-wing aircraft.

13. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had made a number of observations and recommendations that were common to the peacekeeping missions currently under consideration by the Fifth Committee.

14. Concerning the cost apportionment of applications developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the supply chain management initiative, the Advisory Committee recommended that resource requirements in individual missions should be reduced and be offset by corresponding increases in the support account. Regarding vacancy rates for those missions that contributed personnel to and were clients of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, the Advisory Committee recommended a higher rate for national personnel. The Advisory Committee had also identified issues relating to official travel in 2015/16, such as multiple trips to the same or nearby locations, and the need for greater use of video- and tele-conferencing, and had made recommendations in that regard.

15. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MINUSCA (A/69/839/Add.12), he said that the Advisory Committee noted the lack of analysis of variances in the performance report; while there had been commitment authority for the period, the Secretary-General should have provided more details of the budget lines on which the commitment authority had been based. Regarding the proposed budget for 2015/16, the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $14,667,100.

16. While the budget proposal did not reflect the increased levels of military and police personnel authorized in Security Council resolution 2212 (2015), it provided a valid baseline for the establishment of MINUSCA pending deployment of uniformed personnel and analysis of budget requirements.

17. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MONUSCO (A/69/839/Add.5), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $7,396,800 for 2015/16. The Advisory Committee welcomed the efforts to reprioritize the Mission's resources in order to minimize the budget shortfall. In view of the cash position for the current financial period, there was no need at present for an additional appropriation. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the level of the additional requirements proposed, in addition to the amount already appropriated, and to provide detailed information on actual expenditure in the performance report.

18. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MINUSTAH (A/69/839/Add.4), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $3,335,300 for 2015/16. Under civilian staffing, the Advisory Committee had no objection to the ongoing consolidation process in the Mission, and recommended abolishment of a post that had been vacant for more than two years, in line with its previous recommendation that such posts should be reviewed and be proposed either for abolishment or retention.

19. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNMIL (A/69/839/Add.11), he said, with regard to 2014/15, that in view of the Controller's letter dated 12 May 2015 (A/C.5/69/22) the Advisory Committee's recommendations had been superseded, since the additional funding would no longer be required. For 2015/16, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $2,346,300, reflecting updated estimates of lower operational costs.

20. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on MINUSMA (A/69/839/Add.2), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a net decrease of $1,644,000 for 2015/16. Under operational costs, the Advisory Committee considered that the provisions for unmanned aerial systems had not been clearly presented, and recalled the need for greater consistency and transparency in the budgeting for such systems in all peacekeeping missions.

21. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNDOF (A/69/839/Add.1), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a net decrease of $40,478 for 2015/16. In view of the security situation in the area of operations, the Advisory Committee commended the Force on its capacity to respond flexibly and adjust its operations in challenging circumstances while ensuring the safety and security of its personnel.

22. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNIFIL (A/69/839/Add.8), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $3,493,300 in the proposed budget for 2015/16. The most significant staffing change related to the proposed abolishment of 48 engineering posts, with the corresponding functions being outsourced. However, security and economic conditions in Lebanon might affect the viability of that proposal. Alternatives were being developed to enable the mission to maintain its operations with the staffing

level proposed for 2015/16. Information should be made available to the Assembly to provide the necessary assurance that endorsement of the proposed staffing table following abolishment of the 48 posts would not have a detrimental impact on the provision of essential maintenance support services.

23. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNMISS (A/69/839/Add.15), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $14,551,700 in the proposed budget for 2015/16. On staffing, the Advisory Committee recommended against the proposed establishment of the D-1 Deputy Director in the Human Rights Division, and also recommended the abolishment of 26 posts that had been vacant for two years or longer. It further recommended reductions under air transportation in connection with the deployment of an unmanned aerial system.

24. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNAMID (A/69/839/Add.6), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $2,249,300 in the proposed budget for 2015/16.

25. Under operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction in the proposed budget for the rental of office space and facilities in the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe for the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Support Services, with the costs to be reflected in the support account.

26. Under medical, bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 68/281 on the single rate of reimbursement, should the Assembly decide that the reimbursement of yellow fever vaccinations was included in the single rate, there would be a commensurate reduction in the UNAMID budget proposal.

27. **Mr. Dosseh** (Togo), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, paid tribute to those who had lost their lives in the service of the United Nations.

28. The Group took note of the performance reports for 2013/14, the financial resource performance of 96 per cent for 2013/14, with a total approved budget of $783.32 billion for active operations, the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) and the United Nations Logistics Base; the updates of expenditure for 2014/15, with approved resources of $8.46 billion; and the projected expenditure for 2015/16 of $8.49 billion.

29. The Group would welcome details of budget implementation in respect of facilities and infrastructure, accommodation, recruitment and human resources management, as well as other mission support elements. The Group attached great importance to the allocation of adequate resources to peacekeeping operations, and specifically to those in Africa — taking into account the unique circumstances justifying their mandates and the magnitude of the challenges posed by field operations — as being critical to the efficient, effective and timely delivery of mandates.

30. While the overall peacekeeping budget reflected a slight increase, reductions were proposed for individual operations despite the expansion of their mandates or more complex operational environments. Consideration of peacekeeping budgets should not be approached as a simple cost-reduction exercise, but as a responsible exercise in mandate implementation and resource allocation. It was regrettable that unjustified, across-the-board, cuts were still being presented to Member States; such an approach was likely to endanger implementation of mission mandates. The Group was particularly interested in cross-cutting issues linked to successful implementation of mandates, including Umoja, facilities and infrastructure, oversight, ethics, sexual exploitation, accountability, protection of whistle-blowers, and the situation in the Central African Republic.

31. **Mr. Lasso Mendoza** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that MINUSTAH had made significant progress in supporting the efforts of the Haitian people to consolidate stability and the rule of law and promote social and economic development. Nevertheless, Haiti remained beset by challenges.

32. CELAC was committed to helping Haiti to achieve stabilization, peace and sustainable development. To that end, CELAC countries contributed most of the police and military personnel to MINUSTAH, and also provided bilateral support in the form of technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance and medical teams.

33. CELAC noted the proposed decrease of 22.1 per cent, $110,524,600, in the MINUSTAH budget for 2015/16. It would scrutinize the proposals with a view to ensuring that the Mission had the resources needed

to deliver its mandate and the capacity to support the Government in the areas of security, democratic governance, the rule of law, human rights, and humanitarian and health activities.

34. CELAC disagreed with any arbitrary reductions in the Mission resources without technical justification. The MINUSTAH budget, like those of other peacekeeping missions, should be based on technical criteria, including the situation on the ground and the current mandate approved by the Security Council, without prejudging future mandates.

35. The Community acknowledged the progress made towards the holding of elections and looked forward to observance of the electoral calendar as put forward by the Provisional Electoral Council and the President. He reiterated the need for MINUSTAH to receive the resources needed to provide adequate technical, logistical and security support during the electoral process.

36. CELAC was firmly convinced of the importance of the role played by MINUSTAH, in cooperation with other actors, in responding to Haiti's needs, and encouraged the Mission, within the framework of its mandate, to make every effort to support reconstruction and development.

37. Community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects were critical and effective tools in fostering sustainable peace and security, and should be adequately funded. CELAC welcomed the deeper integration of such programmes in the rule of law activities of the Mission. CELAC recognized the improvement in the relationship between MINUSTAH and the local population, attained through the implementation of quick-impact projects, which should continue in line with the priorities of the Haitian Government.

38. CELAC expressed its willingness to continue working with the Government and people of Haiti to establish long-term development strategies and, if necessary, to continue contributing to peacekeeping activities. CELAC members had responded promptly to the Haitian authorities' requests for cooperation, even before the establishment of MINUSTAH, and would work to ensure that the Mission had the resources to implement its mandate. He urged other Members of the United Nations to continue working for the reconstruction and future of Haiti.

39. **Mr. Sheck** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that the three delegations were strong supporters of MINUSTAH and of the priorities established for the Mission in, inter alia, the areas of security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and institutional development. He welcomed the improvement in the country's economic indicators and the security situation.

40. Also welcoming the establishment of a calendar for the holding of legislative, local and presidential elections and the electoral assistance and logistical support provided by MINUSTAH, the three delegations called upon Haiti's international partners to provide support to ensure the successful completion of the electoral process as a vital and necessary contribution to the country's stability, prosperity and democratic development.

41. Noting that in keeping with Security Council resolution 2180 (2014) the proposed budget for 2015/16 was based on a reduction in the authorized military component to a force level of 2,370 personnel, and maintenance of the authorized level for the police component at up to 2,601 personnel, the three delegations believed that the gradual reduction in the United Nations footprint in Haiti must reflect the situation on the ground and the capacity of the Haitian State to deliver security to its people. Given that the proposed budget, at some $378 million net, was 22 per cent lower than in 2014/15, and in view of the revision in the authorized troop strength and the reduction in Mission requirements, he looked forward to assurances of enhanced efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the implementation of MINUSTAH's consolidation plan and of the Mission's ability to deliver all the elements of its mandate.

42. The Committee's consideration of the financing of MINUSTAH came at an important time for the Mission and for the Government and people of Haiti. The most important benchmark for overall success was to ensure that the achievements in improved security and stability, governance and institutional legitimacy, and the rule of law and human rights were substantial and constituted a solid, sustainable foundation for a future in which Haiti assumed full responsibility for its own destiny. The Committee must take care that its decisions did not put at risk the results achieved to date and, in particular, the ability of the Mission to contribute to stability and security during the elections.

43. The three delegations were cognizant of the larger perspective regarding the number of active peacekeeping missions and the increasing pressure on resources, and shared the concerns regarding the growth in the overall peacekeeping budget and the need to ensure that missions were mounted, resourced, maintained, and eventually liquidated, with efficiency and cost-effectiveness in mandate delivery as priorities.

44. He noted that the Advisory Committee recommended only a limited reduction in the budget level proposed by the Secretary-General, and would welcome information as to the impact on the Mission. Of the issues raised by the Advisory Committee, the three delegations were particularly interested in those related to the use of air assets in providing enhanced mobility for the Mission's uniformed personnel in order to enable them to respond to requests for assistance, notably from the Haitian National Police, as well as the utilization of Mission aircraft in medical evacuations.

45. Lastly, he noted the concern expressed once again by the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General, in his budget proposals for 2015/16, had not complied with the requirement to rejustify posts that had been vacant for two years or longer. The three delegations agreed that there was a need for such posts to be reviewed and be proposed for retention or for abolishment and wished to hear how that principle was applied to MINUSTAH.

46. Notwithstanding the improvement in the situation in Haiti, work remained to be done. The Committee's decisions should be guided by a collective commitment to ensuring that MINUSTAH had the resources needed to deliver its mandate, fully discharge the responsibilities with which it had been tasked, and provide effective support in the construction of a more stable, secure and prosperous Haiti.

47. **Mr. Guo** Xuejun (China) said that China was a firm supporter of and active participant in peacekeeping operations, as an important means of maintaining international peace and security, and was a major contributor in terms of funding and providing police and military personnel. Thousands of Chinese peacekeepers were currently serving in various zones of operation.

48. His delegation supported the guaranteeing of peacekeeping resources in all areas and opposed reductions, and did not object to the increased appropriations for peacekeeping in recent years, provided that they were justified. Noting that three of the peacekeeping operations before the Committee had budgets in excess of $1 billion, with two others approaching $1 billion, he called for strengthened budget management. There were many shortcomings in missions in the areas of budget formulation, procurement, air transport and assets management. Peacekeeping budgets were funded by the taxpayers of Member States; delegations should demonstrate realism and strengthen accountability and oversight of budget performance.

49. The Security Council was currently formulating the drawdown and exit strategy for certain peacekeeping missions, a factor to be taken into account in budget formulation. Account must be taken of the views and concerns of the States involved, with respect for their sovereignty, as they had a better understanding of the issues, in the formulation of mandates and budgets. Account must also be taken of the concerns of troop- and police-contributing countries, which had made immense contributions to peacekeeping operations. The United Nations should reimburse those countries promptly and give precedence to their nationals in peacekeeping recruitment.

50. He insisted that the security of peacekeeping personnel must be guaranteed. The Department of Safety and Security had classified 42 per cent of peacekeeping zones as high risk. Peacekeeping did not necessarily involve fighting, but effective measures needed to be taken to better ensure the security of peacekeeping personnel.

51. His delegation expected quick-impact projects to be genuinely quick impact. They offered real benefits to those living in the zones of operation of peacekeeping missions. The Board of Auditors had noted serious delays in the implementation of such projects. That must change, so that peacekeeping operations enjoyed the support of local residents.

52. **Mr. Régis** (Haiti) said that Haiti, which had benefited from the support of MINUSTAH for a decade, had reached a turning point in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law: free, credible, transparent and inclusive elections for municipalities, the legislature, and for the presidency, would take place, beginning in August 2015 and culminating in the inauguration of a new president in 2016.

53. MINUSTAH continued to play an essential role in helping the authorities to establish a secure and stable environment by buttressing the rule of law and law enforcement, in particular by strengthening the Haitian National Police. Noting that the Mission would progressively reduce its footprint, he called for MINUSTAH to focus on support for the National Police and attainment of the target of 15,000 police officers by December 2016 and their deployment country-wide. Staffing of the Mission should reflect the situation on the ground: both the military and the police components should remain at a level sufficient to avoid any gaps in security that could threaten the complex electoral cycle and the progress made towards stability. The success of the elections would be a test for both Haiti and the credibility of stabilization and peacekeeping missions in general.

54. The Government was particularly concerned to see a well-ordered transition as MINUSTAH withdrew. In that connection, he noted the Secretary-General's wish for MINUSTAH to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations in the discharge of its mandate. Regular consultations would be held with the Organization of American States, the Union of South American Nations, and the Caribbean Community on strategies for support of the elections so as to ensure sustainable stability. In that regard, he welcomed the acknowledgement of progress in human rights as a result of Government initiatives.

55. Each peacekeeping operation was unique, reflecting its composition and operational context. His Government fully subscribed to the principle that peacekeeping budgets should be self-contained and distinct. Similarly, transitions should be tailored to the specific circumstances, and the needs and priorities, of the host country.

56. It was essential for MINUSTAH to be adequately funded, taking into account the situation on the ground. He trusted that all stakeholders would ensure funding for the Mission for 2015/16.

57. **Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala), noting that Guatemala contributed troops to MINUSTAH, said that the support of the international community had resulted in significant economic and social progress in Haiti. Accordingly, he questioned the proposed reduction of 22.1 per cent in the budget for 2015/16 given the deterioration in the security situation and the death of a MINUSTAH peacekeeper.

58. Three rounds of elections were scheduled for 2015 over a six-month period. Yet the Haitian National Police still lacked the resources needed to assume full responsibility for security, especially during the elections. The drawdown in the military contingent meant that the requisite logistical and security support could not be provided. The necessary resources should be made available to support the electoral process, which was critical to the functioning of democracy in the country. Particularly in view of the request by the President of Haiti for the withdrawal of troops to cease and for a strengthening of the police contingent and of MINUSTAH's presence on the ground, troop levels and current resources should be maintained as the existing mandate had not altered and was not due to be reviewed until October 2015.

59. It was equally important to maintain the quick-impact and community violence reduction projects as tools in helping the Government to strengthen the rule of law.

60. **Mr. Rodrigues dos Santos** (Brazil) said that Brazil supported implementation of MINUSTAH's consolidation plan, setting out the conditions for a drawdown of the United Nations military presence in Haiti in line with the security situation on the ground, as well as the transition of responsibilities to national authorities and the United Nations country team. He welcomed the progress made in terms of disease control, recruitment of police officers and the scheduling of local, legislative and presidential elections.

61. The Haitian authorities required strong support from MINUSTAH as well as from the country's international partners in ensuring legitimate, free and fair elections. A successful electoral process was critical to a sustainable drawdown of the Mission. Setbacks risked unravelling the security situation and reversing the gains achieved since 2010. It was therefore crucial to adopt a responsible approach to financing MINUSTAH in the coming financial year. The reduction in the Mission's footprint must be guided by the security situation on the ground, including its social and political dimensions, as well as by the capacity of the Haitian Government to play a growing role.

62. Each peacekeeping mission budget should be approved on the basis of its existing mandate and conditions on the ground. Resource levels for MINUSTAH, specifically, should be defined in terms

of support for the upcoming elections, the strengthening of national police capacity, and the development of the national Administration, including in such critical areas as the rule of law and corrections.

63. As MINUSTAH's military component underwent a significant 53-per-cent reduction, and the Mission's physical presence throughout Haiti was greatly reduced as a result of the most recent Security Council mandate, it was essential for its forces to maintain the necessary mobility to deal with emergencies and maintain stability in areas where they were no longer stationed. Similarly, community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects remained essential tools for promoting improved relations between the Mission and the local population, as well as for fostering sustainable peace and security in the country, particularly as MINUSTAH reduced its military footprint and responsibilities were transferred to local authorities.

64. His delegation firmly opposed any attempt to adjust budget levels on the basis of arbitrary financial imperatives, including the needs of other peacekeeping missions or intended overall budget levels for peace operations, and would engage actively and constructively in order to guarantee that MINUSTAH was adequately funded to undertake its mandated activities. It would also seek clarification of the arrangements for certain types of medical evacuation cases.

65. For MINUSTAH to achieve its objectives, the Mission must simultaneously address not only security issues, but also human rights, as well as socially inclusive and sustainable development. A responsible and well-funded drawdown would constitute the foundation for durable stability and a successful conclusion to MINUSTAH's activities.

66. **Mr. Ayzouki** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the deployment of UNDOF had been necessitated by Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan and its refusal to abide by Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for a full withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967, so that its financing was the responsibility of Israel as the party responsible for the aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic and the occupation of its territory.

67. The Secretary-General's reports must be neutral and not politicized, and reflect reality. Yet the proposed budget for UNDOF for 2015/16 ignored the reason for the deterioration in the security situation on the Bravo side, which was attributable to activities by terrorist groups that were targeting institutions and infrastructure throughout Syrian territory, including UNDOF installations. The report also ignored Israeli military activities in support of terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaida, with the resultant increase in tension in the area of separation, to the detriment of the security of UNDOF personnel and the work of the Force.

68. Israeli forces were playing an active role in the acts of aggression against UNDOF, in violation of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, United Nations resolutions, and international law. Israel provided logistical support for terrorists and conducted military operations in Syrian territory. The withdrawal of UNDOF from some of its positions had allowed the terrorist groups free rein to organize rear bases for attacks on Syrian forces with the assistance of Israeli forces. UNDOF should return to its positions as soon as possible — his Government had provided all necessary support to the Force to allow it to redeploy in the area of separation and was driving out the terrorists with a view to ensuring stability in the area.

69. In addition, the budget proposals for UNDOF referred to the conflict in Syria as a civil conflict, whereas it was a war against terrorism. Many of the groups active in the area of separation were, in fact, on the Security Council's list of terrorist entities, while the references to armed groups should be to terrorist groups, many of which were affiliated with Al-Qaida. The Secretary-General's report also failed to refer accurately to the abduction of peacekeepers by armed terrorist groups, referring instead to Syrian opposition forces. The report should be corrected, and future reports should better reflect reality.

70. The proposed abolition of 21 national posts was an unprecedented injustice in what was one of the smaller missions in terms of personnel and budget. The explanation that the reduction was justified by relocation of the UNDOF headquarters and the situation in the area of separation was not convincing. The proposal to convert two temporary positions for military personnel to permanent posts also lacked convincing justification, contravened standard administrative procedures, and failed to take account of the terms of the Disengagement Agreement and the agreement on basic operating procedures. It should be kept in mind that UNDOF was a military mission, with

a mandate covering the ceasefire line and separation zone, and should not stray into the political sphere.

71. His Government had provided every support for UNDOF, intended to be a temporary presence pending implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and an end to the occupation of the Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic aspired to a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the region and, to that end, a withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967. Lastly, he welcomed the cooperation between UNDOF and the competent authorities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

72. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Colombia) noted with concern that the budget for MINUSTAH for 2015/16 showed a decrease of 22.1 per cent. While the situation in Haiti was complex, the past year had seen significant progress in the consolidation of democracy and the strengthening of national institutions, as exemplified by the anticipated holding of three rounds of elections. It was of the utmost importance for MINUSTAH to provide support in a particularly complex electoral process.

73. The allocation of resources to the Mission must reflect the current context in the country. It was important not to undermine its capacity to fully discharge its mandate or to imperil the progress made. The commitment of the United Nations, as reflected in a budget for MINUSTAH that allowed it to complete all the tasks assigned to it, remained a fundamental element in stability and the strengthening of democratic institutions in Haiti.

74. **Ms. Gouret-Verschueren** (France) said that allegations had been made of sexual assault by troops deployed in the Central African Republic as part of Operation Sangaris, mounted by France in support of MINUSCA, and thus outside the context of United Nations peacekeeping. Nevertheless, in the interest of transparency, she wished to inform the Committee that her Government had immediately referred the matter to the national legal authorities, and a preliminary investigation into the facts had begun in situ in August 2014. In May 2015 the State prosecutor had reviewed supplementary information from the United Nations. The authorities were now seeking to verify the facts in the matter. If the allegations proved to be substantiated, exemplary punishment would be meted out commensurate with the seriousness of the offences.

75. **Mr. Goren** (Israel) said that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was engaging in a fantastic rewriting of history. The references to acts of terror might better have been applied to a Government that dropped chlorine bombs on its own civilians, as the Syrian Government had a few days previously. UNDOF forces, sent to serve as a buffer, had taken cover in Israel, which routinely supported the Mission, as in the case of kidnapped Fijian soldiers and the quick crossing of UNDOF forces into Israel.

76. His Government supported peacekeeping in general, as exemplified by the fact that it was the only country of the region to have paid all its assessments in full and on time. The cynical Syrian statement was merely a desperate attempt to divert attention from the real issues before the Committee. The Syrian Government had zero credibility, and cared nothing for its own people or the people of the Middle East.

77. The continuing politicization of the item before the Committee was unacceptable and should be condemned. He hoped that the deafening silence on the issue would not continue.

78. **The Chair** recalled that the task of the Fifth Committee was to consider complex issues relating to the financing of peacekeeping operations; it should show respect for those who had devoted their lives to protecting peace and security. He urged the Committee to remain focused on the facts and its sphere of competence and not stray into very complex political issues.

79. **Mr. Ayzouki** (Syrian Arab Republic) commended those who served the cause of peace. His delegation agreed that the Committee needed to focus on technical issues. His earlier remarks concerned the reason why UNDOF had existed for almost half a century, namely, Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan: Israel needed to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 line. For those reasons, Israel should be accountable for the financing of UNDOF.

80. Regrettably, the representative of Israel was seeking to politicize the issue, by overlooking the fact that UNDOF had been established owing to the criminal actions of the Israeli Government. Israel's acts of aggression against peacekeepers were an insult to Member States. The representative of Israel, whose Government was responsible for unprecedented horrors in Palestine and in Syria, was lying and seeking to misrepresent reality. The Israeli Government was

responsible for terrible violations of human rights, including killings at holy sites.

81. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to rule 109 of the rules of procedure allowing the Chair to call a speaker to order if his remarks were not relevant to the subject under discussion. In the interest of impartiality he would offer the floor to the representative of Israel, after which the Committee must return to its core issues.

82. **Mr. Goren** (Israel) said that his delegation appreciated the importance of focusing on the issues at hand and not politicizing matters, as attempted by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, whose ridiculous accusations did no service to the Committee, its work, and the importance of peacekeeping.

83. **The Chair** urged the Committee to focus on the issues it had to deal with, without commenting on political complexities.

The meeting rose at 12 p.m.